

ALTERNATIVE B

OVERALL CONCEPT

This alternative would separate uses by concentrating facilities and services at the ends of the island and by creating an increasingly primitive wilderness experience toward the middle of the island. Visitors would find a full range of facilities and services and a more structured experience at Rock Harbor and Windigo, the primary access points to the island, which would both require some increased development. A more primitive wilderness experience with quiet and solitude would be found toward the center of the island, where most facilities and amenities would be removed. Limits on the number of visitors there would probably be necessary.

In addition to orientation and interpretation offered at the Houghton headquarters, a broad range of services would be available at both ends of the island. Rock Harbor and Windigo would offer a full range of orientation information and services. No formal interpretation would be provided in the middle of the island.

Some cultural resources in developed and frontcountry zones could be preserved through adaptive use for lodging, interpretation, or operations. Cultural resources toward the middle of the island would be documented and allowed to deteriorate.

Additional staff (and housing) might be needed at Windigo to operate expanded sewer and water treatment facilities. The Amygdaloid Island ranger station would remain, but the Malone Bay station in the middle of the island would be removed.

PARK MANAGEMENT ZONING

Zoning would be used to separate uses and provide the differing degrees of wilderness experience desired by various user groups. The

current range of uses would continue, but the experiences would be separated by zones. Hikers, boaters, and paddlers who desire solitude and a primitive wilderness experience would find it in the primitive and pristine zones in the center of the island. A more structured day use experience would be possible in the developed and frontcountry zones at either end. A backcountry zone would provide a transition between the two.

All visitors to the island would enter through the two **developed zones** at Rock Harbor and Windigo (see Alternative B map). Some facilities and services would be expanded to accommodate visitors preparing to go into the interior and visitors using the developed areas as a base for day use activities. The increased use in the developed areas would result in increased traffic on trails, which would be maintained to a higher standard. Ferries would serve Rock Harbor and Windigo, and water taxis would serve only the developed and frontcountry zones. Actions to implement this concept in the developed zone would be:

- Retain the marina in Snug Harbor and provide new dock slips (no utilities) in Tobin Harbor and new docks and/or mooring at Windigo. Parkwide actions would result in no net loss in overnight docking. Docks would not be removed until replacements in new areas became operational.
- Provide a greater proportion of lower-cost housekeeping units at Rock Harbor.
- Expand water and sewer treatment capacity at Rock Harbor and Windigo. This would require a new sewage treatment plant and additional staff housing at Windigo.

The **frontcountry zone**, particularly at the east end of the island, would be relatively large to accommodate the anticipated concentration of day use. Frontcountry zones would be located

near developed zones and in areas where there are natural or cultural features of special interest. In the frontcountry zone, day use and interpretation/educational opportunities would be emphasized in nonwilderness areas and a relatively high use level would be expected. Actions to implement this concept would include:

- retaining interpretive facilities at Edisen Fishery, Rock Harbor Lighthouse, and Raspberry Island
- maintaining selected day hike trails to a higher standard for increased use
- converting Daisy Farm to a hiker/paddler campground (convert dock to day use only), which would reserve the campground for those who need another option within a day's travel of Rock Harbor
- considering adaptive use of historic structures on Washington, Barnum, and Passage Islands for rustic lodging for visitors or housing for volunteers or park staff

The **backcountry zone** would provide a transition between the developed and frontcountry zones and the more primitive zones. Day use, higher standard trails, campgrounds, and docks would be appropriate. This zone would offer more opportunities for day users from the developed areas and would disperse hikers into the more remote zones. It would also allow for better access to popular trails and interpretive sites. Some docks would be removed and new campgrounds with docks would be provided, which would serve to separate user groups. Implementation actions would include:

- providing new campgrounds for motorboaters and paddlers at Tobin Harbor (adaptively use docks), on one of the islands on the south side of the Rock Harbor channel, on the south side of Moskey Basin, Crystal Cove, and on Johns Island

- converting Duncan Bay, McCargoe Cove, and Siskiwit Bay to hiker/paddler campgrounds by removing docks

The **primitive zone** would primarily be used to provide more primitive trail corridors through the middle of the island. Most facilities along the trails or in campgrounds at the shoreline would be removed. To enhance solitude, no groups of more than six people would be allowed. The actions to implement this concept would be:

- removing docks at Birch Island, Malone Bay, and Todd Harbor
- providing a new paddler campground at Washington Harbor
- providing a new paddler campground on the Lake Superior shoreline between Duncan Narrows and the mouth of McCargoe Cove

The experience in the **pristine zone** would be the most remote available on the island with the most opportunities for solitude. To enhance the experience there would be virtually no facilities. There would be no docks, but primitive, anchor-out boat camping would be encouraged. The actions to implement this concept would be:

- removing docks at Wright Island, Fishermans Home, and Hay Bay
- allowing structures to decay at Wright Island and Fishermans Home

Quiet/no-wake zone designations were used in this alternative to expand primitive wilderness opportunities for boaters (see the Alternative B map).

The **nonmotorized waters zone** would be used to improve the wilderness character of the adjacent land and provide a better experience for paddlers. This could also protect sensitive resource areas. For the most part, these are not primary motorboat corridors (see the Alternative B map).

CONCESSIONS SERVICES

Subsidies of the concession would continue at the expense of other park programs such as trail and dock maintenance and interpretation.

Renovation of the Rock Harbor utility systems would be necessary to bring the systems up to state and federal standards. The concessioner would be assessed an annual utility charge that would be passed on to the public in higher rates for lodging and other services.

Ferries would continue to serve Rock Harbor and Windigo, but there would be no secondary stops toward the center of the island. Water taxi service would be offered only in the developed and front country zones. The seaplane operation would remain unchanged. Given the concept of this alternative, expanded concession facilities would be necessary and appropriate to achieve desired future conditions. Other actions to implement this alternative would include:

- retaining the marina in Snug Harbor and providing new dock slips, without utilities, in Tobin Harbor
- retaining the motel and adding more housekeeping cabins at Rock Harbor
- expanding water and sewer capacity at Rock Harbor and Windigo, which would require a new sewage treatment plant and additional staff housing at Windigo

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing for alternative B would be similar to the proposed action. The first phase would include upgrading the utility systems at Rock Harbor and installing campgrounds and rehabilitating or constructing docks. In general, facilities would be added at the ends of the island before facilities toward the middle of the island would be removed. As facilities were removed from the middle of the island, adjacent nonmotorized water zones would be established.

Over and above alternative A (no action) costs, alternative B construction costs are estimated at \$16,107,000. Additional research, inventory, and monitoring costs are estimated at \$2,130,000 (one-time) and \$10,000 annually. See Appendix B for details.